What is claimed is:

1. A variable length data encoding method for performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal and a sound signal based on a predetermined method to obtain time series data, and obtaining a compressed and encoded signal by encoding the obtained time series data, the variable length data encoding method comprising:

a first step of obtaining a variable length coding table in which predetermined code words are written and allocated to a plurality of data values for the time series data;

a second step of generating an exchanged variable length coding table by exchanging, among code words written in the variable length coding table, the code words to which a same number of the time series data are allocated and differ from each other;

a third step of generating a coding selection signal for specifying an encoding table from any of the variable length coding table and the exchanged variable length coding table to be used for variable length coding; and

a fourth step of generating the compressed and encoded signal by the variable length coding on the time series data by use of the specified encoding table.

2. A variable length data encoding apparatus for performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal and a sound signal based on a predetermined method to obtain time series data, and generating a compressed and encoded signal by encoding the obtained time series data, the variable length data encoding apparatus is configured by comprising:

variable length coding table obtaining means for obtaining a variable length coding table in which predetermined

code words are written and allocated to a plurality of data
values for the time series data;

exchanged variable length coding table generating means
for generating an exchanged variable length coding table
5   by exchanging, among code words written in the variable length
coding table, the code words to which a same number of the
time series data are allocated and differ from each other;

coding selection signal generating means for generating
a coding selection signal for specifying an encoding table
10   from any of the variable length coding table and the exchanged
variable length coding table to be used for variable length
coding; and

variable length coding means for generating the
compressed and encoded signal by the variable length coding
15   on the time series data by use of the specified encoding
table.

3. A variable length encoded data decoding method for
performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on
20   a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal
and a sound signal based on a predetermined method to obtain
time series data, performing variable length coding to generate
a compressed and encoded signal on which variable length
decoding is performed to obtain the time series data, and
25   decoding the obtained time series data to obtain the contents
signal,

wherein the compressed and encoded signal is generated
by performing the variable length coding on the time series
data by use of an encoding table specified by a coding selection
30   signal for specifying the encoding table from any of two
encoding tables of a variable length coding table, in which
predetermined code words are written and allocated to a
plurality of data values for the time series data, and an
exchanged variable length coding table, in which code words

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which have a same number as the time series data and are different from each other among the code words written in the variable length coding table are exchanged to be written therein, the variable length encoded data decoding method

5   comprising:

a first step of detecting the coding selection signal;

a second step of obtaining the time series data by performing the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by using the encoding table specified

10   based on the detected coding selection signal; and

a third step of obtaining the contents signal by decoding the time series data obtained in the second step.

4. A variable length encoded data decoding method for

15   performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal and a sound signal based on a predetermined method to obtain time series data, performing variable length coding to generate a compressed and encoded signal on which variable length

20   decoding is performed to obtain the time series data, and decoding the obtained time series data to obtain the contents signal,

wherein the compressed and encoded signal is generated by performing the variable length coding on the time series

25   data by use of an encoding table specified by a coding selection signal for specifying the encoding table from any of two encoding tables of a variable length coding table, in which predetermined code words are written and allocated to a plurality of data values for the time series data, and an

30   exchanged variable length coding table, in which code words which have a same number as the time series data and are different from each other among the code words written in the variable length coding table are exchanged to be written therein, the variable length encoded data decoding method

comprising:

a first step of detecting the coding selection signal;

a second step of selecting whether to perform the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by using the encoding table specified based on the detected coding selection signal or to perform the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by using the variable length coding table in disregard for use of the exchanged variable length coding table when the use of the table is specified by the detected coding selection signal;

a third step of obtaining the time series data by performing the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by use of the encoding table in accordance with a result of the selection in the second step; and

a fourth step of obtaining the contents signal by decoding the time series data obtained in the third step.

5. A variable length encoded data decoding apparatus for performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal and a sound signal based on a predetermined method to obtain time series data, performing variable length coding to generate a compressed and encoded signal on which variable length decoding is performed to obtain the time series data, and decoding the obtained time series data to obtain the contents signal,

wherein the compressed and encoded signal is generated by performing the variable length coding on the time series data by use of an encoding table specified by a coding selection signal for specifying the encoding table from any of two encoding tables of a variable length coding table, in which predetermined code words are written and allocated to a plurality of data values for the time series data, and an exchanged variable length coding table, in which code words

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which have a same number as the time series data and are different from each other among the code words written in the variable length coding table are exchanged to be written therein, the variable length encoded data decoding apparatus comprising:

5

coding selection signal detecting means for detecting the coding selection signal;

variable length decoding means for performing the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal

10   by use of the encoding table specified based on the detected coding selection signal to obtain the time series data; and

contents signal decoding means for decoding the time series data obtain the variable length decoding means to obtain the contents signal.

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6. A variable length encoded data decoding apparatus for performing data transform, quantization and arrangement on a contents signal including at least any of a picture signal and a sound signal based on a predetermined method

20   to obtain time series data, performing variable length coding to generate a compressed and encoded signal on which variable length decoding is performed to obtain the time series data, and decoding the obtained time series data to obtain the contents signal,

25   wherein the compressed and encoded signal is generated by performing the variable length coding on the time series data by use of an encoding table specified by a coding selection signal for specifying the encoding table from any of two encoding tables of a variable length coding table, in which

30   predetermined code words are written and allocated to a plurality of data values for the time series data, and an exchanged variable length coding table, in which code words which have a same number as the time series data and are different from each other among the code words written in

the variable length coding table are exchanged to be written therein, the variable length encoded data decoding apparatus comprising:

coding selection signal detecting means for detecting
5   the coding selection signal;

variable length coding table selecting means for selecting whether to perform the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by using the encoding table specified based on the detected coding selection signal
10   or to perform the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by using the variable length coding table in disregard for use of the exchanged variable length coding table when the use of the table is specified by the detected coding selection signal;

15   variable length decoding means for obtaining the time series data by performing the variable length decoding on the compressed and encoded signal by use of the encoding table in accordance with a result of the selection by the variable length coding table selecting means; and

20   contents signal decoding means for obtaining the contents signal by decoding the time series data obtained by the variable length decoding means.